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SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**March 16, 2021**

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## Prepare for More Change

Grace to you and peace! One thing seems to be certain - the pandemic has meant change for all of us. We may have experienced different kinds of change, but there has been change - change in what we have been doing; change in our awareness and understanding; change in our feelings, our hopes, and our dreams. We are no longer who we used to be, as individuals and as communities.

Yet, we are now preparing for more change as people receive the COVID-19 vaccines. Restrictions are loosening in different places; some churches have outside worship services; and more churches are setting target dates when inside in-person worship will happen. As we do so, it is important to remember - we are not who we used to be. Recognizing that the pandemic has changed us offers a unique opportunity to reflect and embrace this new reality.

The Rev. Mike Denton, Conference Minister of the Pacific Northwest Conference UCC, recently shared a series of four questions that I would encourage all of us to consider:

1. What is something you did before the pandemic that you are looking forward to doing again?
2. What is something you started to do during the pandemic that you hope to continue?
3. What is something you did before the pandemic that you want to let go of?

4. What is something that you started to do during the pandemic that you will be happy to stop?

The questions above are best answered in a particular context or role: “As a church pastor…”, “As a church member…”, “As a parent…”, As a family member…”, As an employee…”, etc.

These are wonderful questions for personal reflection, but also as a focus for small group sharing as we begin to come together in faith communities.

The season of Lent has always been a time for reflection and encouragement to refocus our lives. This year, it is different because we have spent much of the past year being forced to refocus our lives. As we begin to come out of the pandemic, perhaps we have a greater encouragement to focus in new ways.

Blessings! Char

# News from the Conference Office

## From the Generosity Coordinator

*Blessed be the Lord who loads us with benefits, GOD of our salvation. Psalm 68:19*

Transforming Churches Transforming Lives grant season has ended and we are grateful to all of those interested in and applying for these awards.

Covid-19 has taught us many lessons as we are worshipping in new and different ways. As some of our Churches are beginning to open, please remain vigilant and stay safe. Hopefully, we have all been blessed to receive the vaccine or, are scheduled to do so. We have all been affected by this virus, yet we have remained hopeful, faithful, and continue to trust GOD.

We remain grateful for all the ways that you continue to support this conference, in the good times and the bad. We appreciate your contributions, your continued support, and most of all, your love for this Southeast Conference United Church of Christ. Please continue to be a source of support for each other, let us continue to pray, stay safe, and know that we are ALWAYS stronger together.

May GOD continue to keep us all, bless us all, and soon we will be able to be in community worshiping TOGETHER.

Peace and blessings, as we continue to JOURNEY, TOGETHER...
Min. Carrole Moss

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## Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

- **Monday, March 22, 7 pm Eastern/6 pm Central**
  With more people being vaccinated and Spring on the horizon, questions are being asked about how soon churches might return to in-person worship and what current practices need to be maintained into the future. We invite all Moderators, Church Leaders, and Clergy to be part of the conversation. REGISTER

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## Clergy Zoom Connections for March

- **An Hour of Conversations and Prayer**
  Tuesday, March 16, 23, 30 - 11:00 a.m. Eastern (10:00 a.m. Central); Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/479440102
- **Live Harp Meditations for Ministers**
  Thursday, March 18 - 12:00 p.m. Eastern (11:00 Central)
  20 minutes of meditation with Celtic harp. Silent prayer and reflection following if desired, facilitated by Rev. Jean Norton. (For questions or to sign up for individual Therapeutic Harp Sessions, contact Jean at HeartSongJean@gmail.com.)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/96976838422
- **Especially for Specialized Ministers**
  Tuesday, March 23, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. Eastern (8:30 a.m. Central)
  Zoom: https://zoom.us/j/354744689

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## New Conference Minister Search Update

At the recent SEC Board meeting, it was reported that the Search Committee is pleased with the response from persons interested in the position of the Conference Minister. They are now in the process of interviewing potential candidates. Please hold them in prayer.

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## SEC Annual Meeting is June 18-19, 2021

Look for upcoming news about this year's virtual Conference Annual Meeting. The meeting will include Friday evening worship; Saturday workshops, business, and worship; as well as other options being explored for the evenings prior to the Annual Meeting. Keep alert for future postings!

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## Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2021. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

Week of March 21

- New Hope Congregational Christian; Clio, Alabama
- Southeast Conference Staff
- Cindy L Bovee-Kemper
- Aubra Love
- Tom Mozley
- Alan Ballentine

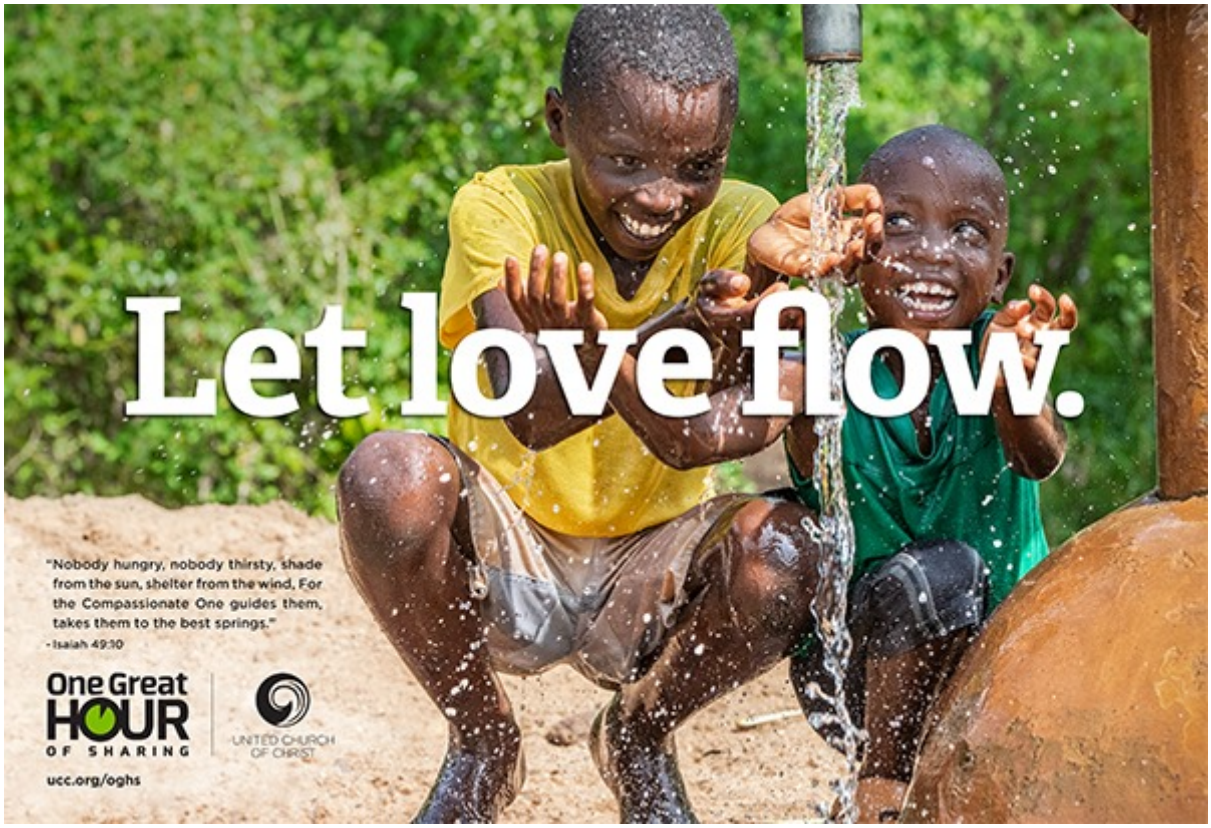
Week of March 28

- Deer Lodge Congregational UCC; Deer Lodge, Tennessee
- James Banks
- Lian Robins
- Jeane Spoor
- Becca Griffin

## Churches in Transition

First Congregational, Savannah GA; Trinity Congregational, Athens AL; Rush Memorial, Atlanta GA; United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN

# News from the Wider Church




## One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing® (OGHS) is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries. OGHS is at work all around the year, all around the world - sharing resources and changing lives. The UCC works with domestic and international partners, to provide support to health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives. The suggested offering date is March 21, 2021 (or choose any date in Lent). 2021 OGHS denominational resources are available online here.

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## Third Annual Southern Conference African American Convocation

Clergy and Laity from churches across the Southeast Conference are invited to attend the Third Annual Southern Conference African American Convocation, hosted by the Southern Conference UCC. This is an online event, from Fri, Apr 16, 2021, 3:00 PM – Sat, Apr 17, 2021, 4:00 PM EDT.

The Convocation will feature dynamic preaching, biblical studies, inspiring worship, and thought-provoking workshops. This will be an all-virtual Convocation. Theme is “Moving with Praise, Prayer and Proclamation” (Acts 2:1-11). Bishop Yvette Flunder (D.Min.) of the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries will be opening worship preacher, and Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson will be closing preacher. John W. Kinney (Ph.D.), Dean of Virginia Union, will be guest panelist and lecturer. The registration cost is $25 and youth are free. REGISTER

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## 2022 Adese Fellowship Applications Now Available

The Adese (from the Amharic language to renew, pronounced ah-deh-say) Fellowship is a year-long, ecumenical program that engages participants in self-discovery, theological reflection and business development as they create enterprises that help their communities follow the way of Jesus and live into God's economy. Adese Fellows fashion a faithful approach to economics as they critique the dominant system and create another way. Participants apply to the program to advance a concept or early-stage

venture, at the heart of which is the biblical call to bring good news to the poor. They are accepting applications from individuals whose ventures are in the seed or incubator stages. Learn more: https://adesefellowship.org/

# Local Church News

## UCC Pastor Shares Story of Mental Health Struggles

Rev. Katie O'Dunne shares how navigating her own mental health journey has given her the opportunity to work at the intersection of faith and mental health (view the full article on our website).

Participate in her work through this survey or upcoming virtual conference to be a part of the change!

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## First Church Atlanta Celebrates with Serrin Joy Scrutchings, "You Are Going To Hollywood!!"

Congratulations to Serrin Joy Scrutchings, the daughter of Joy Scrutchings, who is claimed by First Congregational Church Atlanta as one of their own! Serrin's mother Joy is the Youth Choir Director at First Church.

## "Celebrating Fisk" wins Grammy

Fisk University is excited to announce a 2021 GRAMMY® win for the Fisk Jubilee Singers'® album, *Celebrating Fisk! (The 150th Anniversary Album)*, in the Best Roots Gospel Album category. Located in Nashville, Fisk is historically affiliated with the United Church of Christ and Howard Congregational Church, as it was started by the American Missionary Association in 1866. Listen to the album HERE.

# Trainings and Conferences

## Healthy Boundaries 101 and 201 Offered

The trainings are offered Fridays from 2:45 pm-6:15 pm, and Saturdays from 8:45 am-12:15 pm. You must attend both sessions in order for the training to count toward Authorization Requirements for Ordained, Licensed, and Commissioned Ministers. The possible trainings are **April 30-May 1**, **June 4-5**, **September 18-19**, and **November 5-6**. You will need to pick which of the sessions you want to attend. The fee is $75. You can either pay online at https://www.secucc.org/giving/donate/. Choose "other donation" and be sure to list Healthy Boundary Training on the line provided. Alternatively, you can send a check to the Southeast Conference at PO Box 1950, Decatur GA 30031. If you have any questions or concerns,

please contact Rev. Heather Fosburgh at hfosburgh@secucc.org or call 404-719-6572.

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## Register today for Courageous Church

Courageous Church Online Summit, scheduled from May 10-14, 2021, will feature 20 presenters over five days on Reimagining Our Common Ground for the Collective Good. The Courageous Church Summit provides a critical look at where we are now and how we get to a more sustainable and equitable future. Through interviews with influential North American faith leaders in activist-oriented congregations, the Courageous Church Summit equips virtual leaders with the audacity, connections, and practical advice to be active leaders in an emerging movement for change.
Visit convergencesummit.online for more information and to register.

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## Cultivating Generous Congregations

The Cultivating Generous Congregations Seminar for pastors and lay leaders offers an opportunity to explore faithful, practical, and tested ways to promoting generosity in our congregations. The seminar draws on current research, seeks guidance from the wisdom of scripture, and discusses the best practices in church-based fundraising. Class sessions held May 19, May 26, June 2, June 9, June 16, and June 23, 2021 from 6:30 – 8:00pm EST. Between class sessions, the instructors provide materials to help you analyze the culture of your own congregation and learn how to create change. The CGC Seminar is $150 per participant. Register here by April 30, 2021.

## Conference Calendar

March 16 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

March 18 @ 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm EDT
Live Harp Meditations for Ministers
March 18 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT
Commission on Ministry Meeting

March 22 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT
Re-Opening of Churches – Conversation for all Church Leaders

March 23 @ 9:30 am - 11:00 am EDT
Zoom Conversation for Specialized Ministers

March 23 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

March 30 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT
Clergy Conversations via Zoom

April 8 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT
Board of Directors Meeting

April 15 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT
Commission on Ministry Meeting

View the **full calendar** of events online: https://www.secucc.org/events/

## Contact Us

Conference Minister: **Rev. Char Burch;** cburch@secucc.org

Assoc. Conf. Minister: **Rev. Heather Fosburgh;** hfosburgh@secucc.org

Generosity Coordinator: **Min. Carrole Moss;** cmoss@secucc.org

Director of Communications: **Don Harris;** dharris@secucc.org

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